

ARF NOTES

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: JOYCE LINDEN

As I write the column for this issue of the *ARF Notes*, it feels like a very busy time of year, even for us retired folks. With the exception of “FERPers” and any others who are teaching part-time, we don’t have to deal with grading papers AND getting ready for the holidays at the same time!

As usual, **ARF** has presented an active fall schedule of programs and events for our members. At our last meeting on campus in November, Dr. Flavia Fleischer spoke to us about the importance of Deaf Studies. As Chair of that Department, she gave a very academic and energetic overview of how learning the language and culture of Deaf people changes our perspective on what it means to be human and cognizant of the differences and challenges that we all face. I also attended a recent SCCARF dinner and received a note from an **ARF** member referring to the evening “As . . . always, a perfect evening of tasty food and marvelous fellowship!” In addition, I attended one of **ARF**’s Film Groups and enjoyed sharing responses to current movies with other members. We invite you to volunteer other ideas for special interest groups and step up to organize and plan them. We can publicize them at our meetings and in the newsletter.



At the campus level, I’ve been asked to remind you all that there is a 10% discount on tickets for **ARF** members for the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC) on campus. Also, volunteers are needed to serve on a new campus Committee being formed by the Faculty Senate, “Campus Connections,” which will improve communica-

tions between the VPAC and all campus programs and organizations. There is always so much going on at CSUN, and we have the opportunity to subscribe to the weekly on-line news to try to keep up with it all. I also want to encourage you to join ERFA if you have not already done so. We also need to show our support and keep up with the state-wide organization of Retired Faculty. Deducting from our retirement checks is the easiest way to do it!

Next month brings our “Thank God the Holidays are Over Banquet” on Jan. 11th, with the magic of entertainers Steve Longacre and Greg Koppel. They are both CSUN graduates (1978) and will provide us with a fun-filled evening of their award-winning magic. Needle ARF will present a Silent Auction of their lovely handmade items, proceeds to be added to the **ARF** scholarship fund. Don’t miss this special evening. I will close this column with my very best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season and a Wonderful New Year!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CSUN NEWS	2
ARF PROGRAMS	3
EMERITI NEWS	4
IN MEMORIAM	5
SCARF REPORT	5
FILM GROUPS	5
BOOK GROUPS	7

CSUN NEWS

CSUN'S STUDENT RECREATION CENTER



Since its opening in 2012, the CSUN Student Recreation Center has been garnering awards for everything from its design to its energy efficiency. Now, the website *best-valueschools.com* has added another accolade to the list, this time focusing on the center's amenities. They've named CSUN's SRC fourth in

their list of the "20 Most Impressive College Gyms and Student Rec Centers." "Two outdoor pools and a 40-foot rock climbing wall set this facility apart," their review says. "This \$41 million LEED Silver rated project isn't among the biggest on our list, but it makes up for this in its range of functional offerings and outstanding design aesthetics."

PROFESSOR WINS LITERARY AWARD

SANDOVAL SAID, "I AM REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS HONOR BECAUSE THIS PROJECT WAS SUCH A COMMUNITY EFFORT OF LOVE, AND IT REALLY SPEAKS TO THE ARTISTIC ACTIVISTS OF THE NORTHEAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AND THE IMPACT THEY ARE MAKING ON THE COMMUNITY."

CSUN Chicana/o studies professor Denise Sandoval and her co-editor Luis Rodriguez have won a Josephine Miles Literary Award from PEN Oakland for a community history project documenting art activism in the northeast San Fernando Valley.

The pair formally received the award for the book, *Rushing Water, Rising Dreams: How the Arts are Transforming a Community*, on Dec. 7th during a special ceremony that also honored Nobel Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison for her latest book, *Home*, at the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library. Sandoval said, "I am really excited about this honor because this project was such a community effort of love, and it really speaks to the artistic activists of the

northeast San Fernando Valley and the impact they are making on the community. It's wonderful that something you create, that you know is special and important, is recognized by other people as special and important." Called the "Blue Collar PEN" by The New York Times, PEN Oakland has recognized authors for outstanding literary achievement since 1989. The organization's members take pride in the fact that it does not have a board dominated by mainstream publishers. Winners of its annual literary awards are chosen by fellow writers. The purpose of the award is "to recognize literary excellence without limitations or restrictions." Award winners range from well-known and established writers to under-recognized authors and first works. The awards are named for the late Josephine Miles, a renowned American poet and member of the UC Berkeley faculty.

DONATION TO LIBRARY

Ambassador Jian Liu, China's consul-general for Los Angeles, brought a delegation to California State University, Northridge, on Wednesday, Dec. 11th, to mark the donation of more than 2,000 books and other learning materials to the University's Library to expand student and faculty understanding of China.

Liu and China's Consuls for Educational Affairs Wieheng Chen and Liqun Li joined CSUN President Dianne F. Harrison for a special ceremony at noon in the Jack and Florence Ferman Presentation Room of CSUN's Delmar T. Oviatt Library, "CSUN has a very long history of relationships with China," said Harrison,



NOVEMBER 2013 PROGRAM REPORT

The November ARF program was presented by Flavia Fleischer, Chair of the Deaf Studies Department at CSUN. Flavia has the distinction of succeeding her late father, Lawrence Fleischer, in this position. Over the past 17 years, she has taught at many colleges, including Gallaudet College. She is third generation deaf on one parents' side, and fourth generation deaf on the other; in fact her brother is the only hearing person in her immediate family.

The Deaf Studies Department at CSUN, which has 500 majors, about 10% of whom are deaf, prepares students for future employment in fields such as teaching and interpreting, and stresses academics, as opposed to the services offered by the CSUN Center on Deafness. There is a strong emphasis in the Department on the human experience of deafness. We often see a dehumanizing attitude toward the deaf, which implies that they are not fully capable, or that they are an object that needs to be fixed or attended to. The implication is that all deaf children need to be able to speak as everyone else does rather than using their own sign language. Children learn early that they are different and begin at a power disadvantage, and it's sometimes hard to make up early deficits.

For a long time there was the idea that language could only be spoken, but evolutionarily, larger brains did not necessarily correlate with spoken language development. At some point in evolution, spoken language emerged and

signed language was devalued. Studies show that portions of the brain are activated equally by speech (for hearing people) and signs (for deaf people). In fact, ASL (American Sign Language) is not dependent on spoken language, but has its own rules of grammar and vocabulary.



Joyce Linden and Flavia Fleischer

Deafness has been a feature of society for a long time; Aristotle, Socrates, and St. Augustine all mentioned it in their writings. Historically, laws on marriage and property were discriminatory against the deaf, and in religions the curing of the deaf was mentioned prominently. But more recently churches have had a huge impact on promoting deaf education.

In her talk, Flavia presented to us information which gave us a new perspective on the world of deafness, and the advances that are being made by the deaf community. As one interesting example, sidewalk mirrors are being installed in some towns to alert deaf walkers if someone is following them, to help prevent the possibility of being mugged. This is the kind of help which deals with the needs of the deaf on their own terms, rather than as people who need to be changed. *Reported by Ann Perkins.*

JANUARY BANQUET



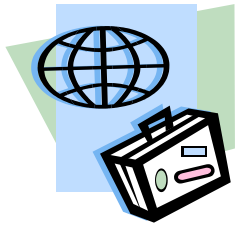
At the January banquet this year, we will be entertained by the dynamic magic duo Greg Koppel and Steve Longacre, who both graduated from CSUN in 1978. They have shared their comedy/magical act both nationally and interna-

tionally. In 2002 in Moscow, Russia, and again in 2004 in Leipzig, Germany, they were recognized for their talents with prestigious international awards. Greg and Steve have continued this tradition by recently win-

ning 1st place within a local Ring chapter of the International Brotherhood of Magicians (I.B.M.). They were previously invited to give a special one-time performance at the world renowned Magic Castle in Hollywood, California.

They can also be found performing in homes for birthday parties, special events, bookstores, and conventions, as well as in large theatres. Their act has transfixed audiences from as young as preschoolers to senior citizens who are over 90 years of age. At one performance, a group of senior citizens commented that the act was the best medicine that they've had in a while!

EMERITI NEWS



Ann and Dave Perkins (Library) spent two weeks in September in Scotland hiking the West Highland Way with some friends. This path (86 miles long from Glasgow to Fort William) is one of the more popular among many hiking paths in Great Britain. We took 8 days for the journey, staying in previously booked B & B's along the way, with our baggage transported from place to place. Thus it was not a very arduous trip, and we were able to enjoy the scenery (small towns, desolate moors, sheep, heather, more sheep) and surprisingly good food at the

end of each day's journey. We did have some light rain on three of the days, but that's to be expected in Scotland. After the hike, Ann and Dave spent a week in Finland, visiting a former exchange student, and enjoyed more good food, including reindeer stew.

Ruth Wold (Modern Languages) has been elected President of the residents' association at The Emeritus in Northridge. She is also pleased to report that her new book on Spanish language, literature & economy is at the publisher.

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IN MEMORIAM

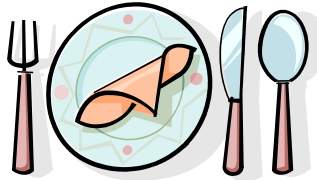


Gerry Leuthy (FCS) died of dementia related causes in a care facility in Glendale, California. She is survived by her son Kevin and his family.

Daniel Sedey (Philosophy), Chair of the department for 17 years, died on Nov. 5th, 2013 of metastatic lung cancer.

SCCARF REPORT

With 34 participants, our group filled four tables in November in the simple but nicely appointed restaurant: Sako's Mediterranean Cuisine. The Reseda eatery, a neighborhood gem hidden behind a strip mall and banquet "palace," was SCCARF's November dinner destination, offering the culinary group a chance to feast on authentic Turkish cuisine. For starters, everyone enjoyed a summer-fresh tomato and cucumber salad together with warm pita bread. From the menu attendees then tizers and entrees, the favorites being lamb many, the house special, Iskender kabob very generous, allowing many SCCARFers Many brought their own wine since the corkage fee proved a big plus. Throughout happy, attesting to the groups' enjoyment company. *(Rita Streimer)*



selected from a wide assortment of appetizers and kabobs of a variety of sorts; for proved a savory choice. Portions were to enjoy their meal a second time at home. restaurant has no liquor license; the \$0 the evening conversation was loud but of quality food in the presence of good

December found 29 SCCARFers enjoying the food and each other's company at Buon Gusto Ristorante in Mission Hills, a culinary excursion that Jeanne Glazer and I arranged. The restaurant provided an open menu loaded with excellent Italian dishes, ranging from a wide selection of pastas to vegetarian dishes to seafood, chicken and veal, each cooked in a distinctive Italian style. Among the more popular dishes were: beef tenderloin al brandy, scallops in white wine and lemon sauce, and pasta alla puttanesca. For the first time we used nametags so as not to overwhelm the newcomers, and perhaps as to aid the memory of regulars, especially since SCCARF has grown quite large. Many in attendance commented positively about both the food and the camaraderie. *(Joyce Linden)*

FILM GROUPS

Twelve members of the **Monday Film Group** met in November at the home of Abe and Vickie Feinberg to discuss *Enough Said*, a romantic comedy, and *Captain Phillips*, an intense film about a freighter captain who is captured by Somali pirates. *(These same films were also viewed by the Tuesday Group, so overlapping or redundant comments will be excluded).* *Enough Said* garnered mostly tepid responses from members. One described it as "pleasantly average," while another commented he didn't fall asleep, implying that it had been a challenge to stay awake. A lot of discussion centered on the character played by Louis-Dreyfus, with several members being

annoyed with her passivity and her inability to stand up for herself or fully engage with anyone--the same tiresome kind of character the actress has played in countless TV roles. However, everyone agreed that the James Gandolfini character was both sensitive and soulful and superbly played by the late actor. Members also praised the dialogue (fresh, witty) and the location and sets as being realistic and believable, particularly



FILM GROUPS CON'T

the houses the main characters lived in. However, one member thought the streets they lived on were too quiet to be credible – lacking barking dogs, leaf blowers and the rumble of trash trucks. Members ranked this film at 7.3.

Although *Captain Phillips* was based on a memoir penned by the real Captain Phillips, members expressed some skepticism about the authenticity of the Hollywood version. But the movie was immensely enjoyed by all, with some offering high praise for the suspense and tension created, particularly the musical score which one member commented was key in sustaining the fear element. Everyone praised Tom Hanks' performance, particularly the ending scenes, when all four of the Somali pirates are seen wedged inside a small orange tub, with Hanks as their prisoner. All four are shot by the U.S. Navy Seals, and Hanks – who heretofore has been the epitome of quiet, stoic leadership – loses his self-control and begins screaming. When he's rescued and brought onto the U.S. Naval ship, he's babbling, unable to speak and can barely comprehend the medic's questions, let alone respond rationally. It's a tour-de-force performance, and one that members thought would earn Hanks an Oscar nomination. Members thought the movie would also be nominated, despite some improbabilities – that the Alabama (Captain Phillips' ship) wasn't armed to protect itself, given how prevalent pirates were in those African waters, or that an armed escort wouldn't have been provided to protect it and its cargo. Several members also questioned whether in the real story the U.S. President actually did send two destroyers, a fleet of helicopters with Navy Seals aboard, and an aircraft carrier to rescue Phillips. With such a show of force, it also seemed implausible that the four Somalis and Hanks, bobbing in the water in that small orange tub, would have stood their ground, still demanding millions in ransom money from the Americans. Members noted the stunning performances of the Somalis, all of whom were non-actors living in Minnesota when they were cast, and the cinematography, with one member noting the special challenges of filming in small crafts on a pitching ocean. Members gave this film a 9, one of the highest scores this year. *Reported by Dorena Knepper.*

The **Tuesday Film Group** met on Nov. 5th at the home of Joyce Linden to discuss the same two films. *Enough Said* explores the drama that often accompanies getting involved in a relationship again. Julia Louis-Dreyfus plays Eve, a divorced, single parent about to become an empty nester after her daughter leaves for college, and James Gandolfini plays Albert, a lovable, sincere guy also facing an empty nest. They connect and romance blossoms, but Eva's positive, loving feelings toward Albert are sabotaged by her masseuse, who happens to be Albert's disparaging ex-wife. While stupidity and mistrust almost breaks them apart, they come together in true rom-com style. The leads display charisma and chemistry that's fun to watch and very real. Both actors play regular people, in that Albert is overweight and Eva dresses in very ordinary clothes. Still, one member mused whether the story would have been as believable or effective with Pierce Brosnan (definitely not overweight) and Melissa McCarthy (who is). Message: don't lie to your boyfriend, men can be sensitive and can be hurt. Rating: 8.25 with a recommendation to catch it on video.

Captain Phillips relates the hijacking of the U.S. container ship Maersk Alabama by Somali pirates 145 miles off the Somali coast in 2009. It focuses on the relationship between the commanding officer, Richard Phillips (played by Tom Hanks), and the pirate captain, Muse (played by Barkhad Abdi), who takes Phillips hostage. Forces beyond the control of either man propel them into an action packed, tense roller-coaster ride of danger, thrills and spills. Authenticity is enhanced by the unforgettable acting of both leads, and by the use of native-born Somali actors as well as a rare look into their lives and motivations for piracy. The Seal Team, nurses and other rescue personnel are portrayed very realistically. Messages: Globalization brings piracy; don't mess with America. Rating: 9.4. Recommendation: This is a must see.

The next meeting took place at the home of Elizabeth Schneider, 18644 Knapp Street, Northridge at 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 3rd. The group is open to new members. *Reported Elizabeth Schneider.*

BOOK GROUPS

Tuesday Book Group

This ARF group continues to meet most months, each time at a different member's home. The group consists of Ron and Robbie Schaffer, Len Pitt, Frank McGinnis, John Irving, Iris Shah, Ruth Schrier, and Jim Allen, and in the last few months we've added Frank Camilleri and Joel Zeitlin. We find stimulating conversation in our congenial group, and we read a great variety of fiction and non-fiction.

We've read, for example, the very interesting biography of J. Piermont Morgan, *Morgan: An American Financier*, by Jean Strouse. This book explored Morgan's upbringing and his connections with family members, his interests in collecting art, and his talent for creating financial deals that helped the U.S. government and himself. Most of us were disappointed in John LeCarre's recent novel, *A Delicate Truth*, because the complexity of the plot and characters seemed not to resolve itself in a satisfying way.

Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*, was a heart-warming story of a small boy's growing up in a small Spanish-American village of New Mexico in the 1940s, where he slowly became aware of the conflicts of good and evil and that between the Catholic Church, a local family of witches, and a traditional healer, or curandera. Which path would Tony decide to follow in understanding life?



The group read a nineteenth-century Russian novel that was not overwhelmingly long, *Oblomov*, by Ivan Goncharov. At our meeting our varied assessments were evident. The lifestyles of some of Russia's landowning class were well portrayed, but most of us didn't care for the title character—a phlegmatic, depressed, and in many ways incompetent man. The long story of what happens to Oblomov is intricate, but in the end, with the help of kind friends, Oblomov found a decent measure of happiness.

We also discussed Jeffrey Toobin's 2012 book, *The Oath*, a highly personal look at the current justices on the U.S. Supreme Court. The book, by a journalist who has specialized in reporting on the Court, was based on numerous interviews. We enjoyed learning a lot about the personalities and distinctive characteristics of each justice, their law school connections, social interactions, and strategies for accomplishing their various goals.

E. M. Forster's early twentieth century novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, contained several strong characters, and as one of our members said, no clichés. The book told the story of an English woman who traveled to Italy, found the love of her life, but died after childbirth. What would happen to the baby was not clear, at first, and the various English and Italian characters gave us a glimpse of the author's perception of middle-class English perceptions of Italians at that time.

For our January meeting we will be discussing short stories by Alice Munro, who was recently awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. The stories we're reading are those collected in her book, *Something I've been Meaning to Tell You*. (Reported by Jim Allen)

Wednesday Book Group

The Wednesday Book Group met on November 6th at 1:30 pm at Chris Smith's house to discuss *Claire of the Sea Light* by Edwidge Danticat. The next meeting was on December 4th. No title was selected, but they considered *Seize the Day*, by Saul Bellow, *Necessary Errors* by Caleb Crain, *And the Mountain Echoed* by Khalid Hosseini. Please contact Linda Jones at ljonesbird@aol.com if you are interested in joining this group. (Reported by Linda Jones)

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